The lure of the desert land

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and other poe

Madge Morris Wagner

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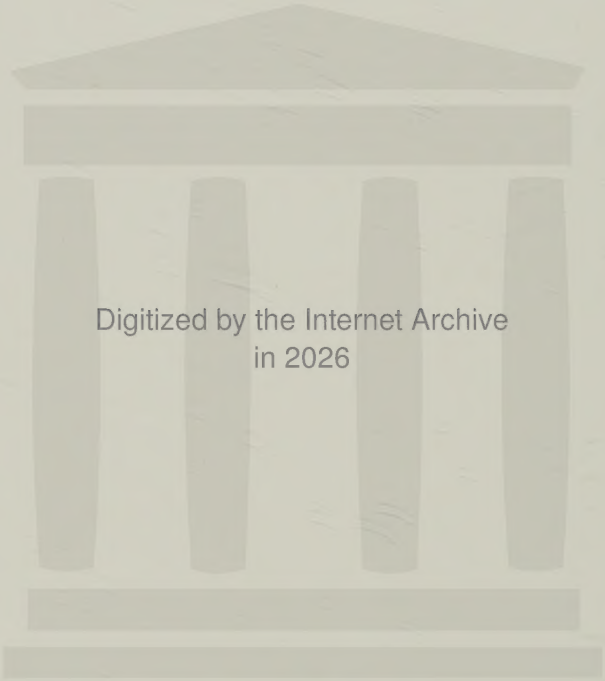
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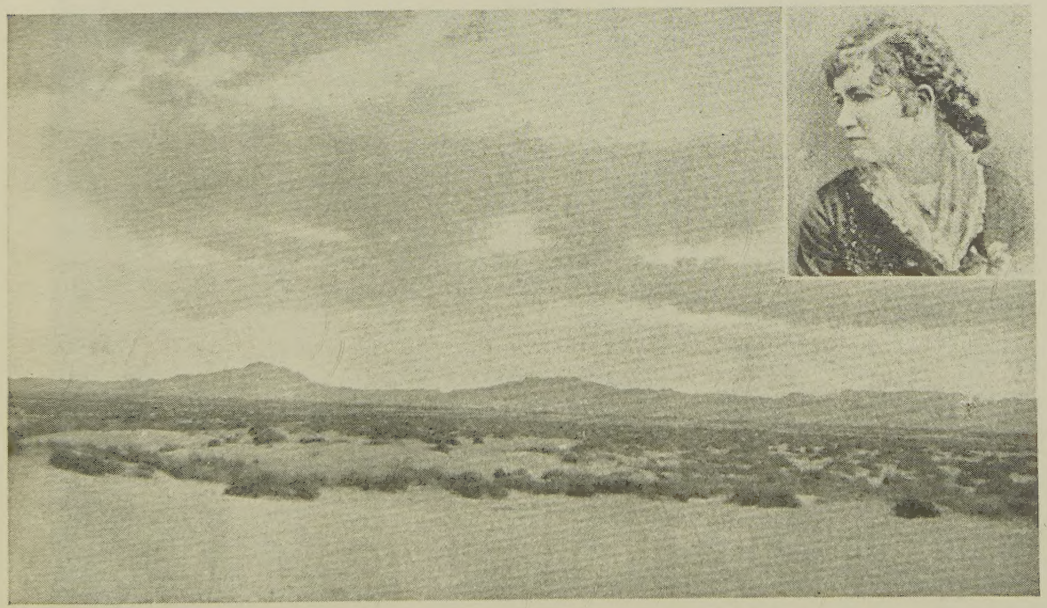

Where a thousand thousand desert miles
All silent round you lie—

Photo taken of author at the time of writing poem "To the Colorado Desert."

The
Lure of the Desert Land
and Other Poems

BY
MADGE MORRIS
(Mrs. Harr Wagner)

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.:
HARR WAGNER PUBLISHING COMPANY
1917

[illegible]

Dedicated to Herr Wagner

349230

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MADGE MORRIS WAGNER

JOAQUIN MILLER'S TRIBUTE TO THE AUTHOR

"And some Orient dawn had found me
Kneeling at the house of fame."

Fame found Madge Morris Wagner in the blazing Colorado desert, her fingers on the pulse of Nature. Or, at least, thither sent Lippincotts of Philadelphia to find her and persuade her to speak through them to the world. And this is what she said, like all who are truly great teachers, making a text of the place and the time:

TO THE COLORADO DESERT

Thou brown, bare-breasted, voiceless mystery,
Hot sphinx of nature, cactus, crowned, what hast thou done?
Unclothed and mute as when the groans of chaos turned
Thy naked burning bosom to the sun.
The mountain silences have speech, the rivers sing.
Thou answerest never unto anything.
Pink-throated lizards pant in thy slim shade;
The horned toad runs rustling in the heat;
The shadowy gray coyote, born afraid,
Steals to some brackish spring and laps, and prowls
Away; and howls, and howls and howls and howls,
Until the solitude is shaken with an added loneliness.
Thy sharp mescal shoots up a giant stalk,
Its century of yearning, to the sunburnt skies,
And drips rare honey from the lips
Of yellow waxen flowers, and dies.
Some lengthwise sun-dried shapes with feet and hands
And thirsty mouths pressed on the sweltering sands,
Mark here and there a gruesome graveless spot
Where some one drank thy scorching hotness, and is not.
God must have made thee in his anger, and forgot.

Not since I can remember have I heard a voice so true as this. It is like the sublime and solemn bass of St. John. It is even John the Baptist crying in the wilderness.

Indeed, I doubt if you will find anything more terribly truthful and fearfully sublime this side of Job than this one lone, lorn cry from the desert. A photo-

graph, even were such a thing possible, could not be more ghastly and ghastly exact. It is true poetry, and therefore more really true than the ordinary forms of truth. For truth can only be told entirely by figures of speech—poetry. There are not words enough in all the languages of this world to tell even the simplest truth exactly, even if there were time enough in the world. We must depend upon figures of speech, as did the seers of the Orient, for the exact truth. But the figures must be true, stately, majestic, impressive. This is poetry; and true poetry is in this sense not only the highest form of truth, but it is the only real truth that is uttered. When the world comes to comprehend poetry it will have a great deal more truth, less quibbling about words, legal technicalities, legal lies.

Turn back and read this poem on the Colorado Desert again, please. You can read it with profit and a certain sort of solemn pleasure a dozen times. There are lines here that are texts, sermons.

"God must have made thee in his anger and
forgot."

Madge Morris Wagner has been all her life with us out here on the great seabank I believe; I know her father, Morris Hilyard, was a Virginian. Maybe, she, too, was a Virginian. I neither know nor care. We fill our books up with the dates and places of birth, things that amount to nothing, and leave little room for deeds or utterances.

What will we do when we come to have 24,000 years of history and biography behind us? Why, we will say as the Chinese say, "this poet lived in a certain dynasty and said so and so." That is all.

So I shall proceed to say what this strange, strong woman of the desert has said from out her heart of hearts. For she is a woman, a very human, tender woman. And you will concede before you have done reading the little bits of her sweet soul which I am permitted to give you that it is great impertinence in me to say much when she is singing. And I want you to know that these next lines of hers are as exactly true in all respects as her lines on the Colorado desert. Her only little baby had gone away from her out from the one narrow room to beyond the darkness; but in

ROCKING THE BABY

I hear her rocking the baby—
Her room is just next to mine—
And I fancy I feel the dimpled arms
That round her neck entwine,
As she rocks, and rocks the baby,
In the room just next to mine.

I hear her rocking the baby
Each day when the twilight comes,
Oh! I know there's a world of blessing and love
In the "baby bye" she hums.
I can see the restless fingers
Playing with "mamma's rings,"
And the sweet little smiling, pouting mouth,
That to hers in kissing clings,
As she rocks and sings to the baby,
And dreams as she rocks and sings.

I hear her rocking the baby,
Slower and slower now,
I know she is leaving her good-night kiss
On its eyes, and cheeks, and brow.
From her rocking, rocking, rocking,
I wonder would she start,
Could she know, through the wall between us,
She is rocking on my heart.
While my empty arms are aching
For a form they may not press
And my emptier heart is breaking
In its desolate loneliness,
I list to the rocking, rocking,
In the room just next to mine,
And breathe a prayer in silence
At a mother's broken shrine,
For the woman who rocks the baby
In the room just next to mine.

Men have fought for Liberty and told her battles o'er,
And died still listening to her far-off call,
Since Miriam struck her timbrel on the Red Sea's shore,
And sang deliverance from Egypt's thrall.

LIBERTY'S BELL

There's a legend told of a far-off land—
The land of a king—where the people planned
To build them a bell that never should ring
But to tell of the death, or the birth, of a king,
Or proclaim an event, by its swinging slow,
That could startle a nation to joy or woe.

It was not to be builded—this bell that they planned—
Of common ore dug from the breast of the land,
But of metal first moulded by skill of all arts—
Built of the treasures of fond human hearts.

And from all o'er the land like pilgrims they came,
Each to cast in a burden, a mite in the flame
Of the furnace—his offering—to mingle and swell
In the curious mass of this wonderful bell.

Knights came in armor and flung in the shields
That had warded off blows on the Saracen fields;
Freemen brought chains from prisons afar—
Bonds that had fettered the captives of war.
And sabers were cast in the molten flood
Stained with the crimson of heroes' blood.
Pledges of love, a bracelet, a ring,
A gem that had gleamed in the crown of a king;
The coins that had ransomed a maiden from death,

The words, hot with eloquence, caught from the
breath
Of a sage, and the prayer on the lips of a slave
Were heard and recorded, and cast in the wave
To be melted and moulded together, and tell
The tale of their wrongs in the tones of the bell.

It was finished at last, and, by artisan hand,
On its ponderous beams hung high o'er the land.
The slow years passed by but no sound ever fell
On a listening ear from the tongue of the bell.
The brown spider wove her frail home on its
walls,
The dust settled deep in its cavernous halls.
Men laughed in derision, and scoffed at the pains
Of the builders; and harder and harder the chains
Of a tyrannous might on the people were laid;
More insatiate, more servile, the tribute they
paid;
There was something they found far more cruel
than death,
And something far sweeter than life's fleeting
breath.

[William O. McDowell, a liberty-loving patriot, of Lincoln Park, Newark, N. J., saw "Liberty's Bell," the poem by Madge Morris Wagner, tacked up beside the old Liberty Bell in historic Independence Hall, Philadelphia. It gave him an inspiration to build a Columbian Liberty Bell as outlined in the poem. He began the work. His children were the first contributors; then the Daughters of the Revolution, headed by Mrs. Adlai Stevenson, took it up; the governors of all the States appointed committees; and it grew and grew until 250,000 historical relics and gifts were received to be molded into his bell. So it became the great National Bell, at the Columbian World's Fair. Chicago by its legal authorities, set apart the Fourth of July, 1893, as Liberty Bell Day, and gave to Mrs. Madge Morris Wagner and Wm. O. McDowell the freedom of the City. It has been customary since the world began to recognize high officials, but seldom have cities so honored those whose best endeavor has been in the direction of the sentiment and soul of liberty.]

But, hark! in the midst of the turbulent throng,
The moans of the weak and the groans of the strong,
There's a cry of alarm. Some invisible power
Is moving the long silent bell in the tower.
Forward and backward, and forward it swung,
And Liberty! Liberty! Liberty! rung
From its wide, brazen throat, over mountain and vale.
Till the seas caught its echo and monarchs turned pale.

Our forefathers heard it — that wild, thrilling tone,
Ringing out to the world, and they claimed it their own.
And up from the valley, and down from the hill,
From the flame of the forge, the field, and the mill,
They paid with their lives the price of its due,
And left it a legacy, freemen, to you.
And ever when danger is menacing nigh,
The mighty bell swings in the belfry on high,
And men wake from their dreams, and grasp in affright,
Their swords, when its warning sweeps out on the night.

It rang a wild paean o'er war's gory waves
When the gyves were unloosed from our millions of slaves;
It started with horror and trembled a knell

From ocean to ocean, when great Lincoln fell.
And once in each year as time onward rolls,
Slowly and muffled and mournful it tolls
A dirge, while Columbia pauses to spread
A tribute of love on the graves of her dead.

While Washington's name is emblazoned in gold,
Or the valor of Lee, or of Sheridan, told,
While patriots treasure the words of a Hayne,
The fiery drops from the pen of a Paine;
While the memory of Morris it's sacrifice gave,
And gratitude lingers to weep at his grave;
While dear is the name of child, mother or wife,
Or sweet to a soul is the measure of life,
America's sons will to battle prepare
When its tones of alarm ring aloud on the air.
For Liberty's goddess holds in her white hand
The cord of the bell that swings over our land.

THE CROWNING OF LIBERTY

She came on that immortal morn,—
  So pale, so wan, and weeping so!
Fair Liberty; bowed with the scorn
  That wrought a suffering people's woe.

She spoke, and in her pleading tones
  A voice came ringing o'er the sea
From fallen Roma's crumbling thrones,
  From graves of old Thermopylae.

The listening breezes heard her plea,
  They told it to the summer morn,
'Twas whispered by each forest tree,
  And by each blade of rustling corn.

'Twas murmured by the brooklet's waves,
  The echoing mountains caught the cry
And flung it back to ocean's caves—
  The ocean rolled it to the sky.

Our patriot sires—that grand old band—
  Had met in troubled council throng,
If that they might, to quench the brand,
  Where smouldering burned a Nation's wrong

They heard fair Liberty's appeal,
  They gazed upon her matchless form;
Each faltering nerve grew firm as steel,
  Each breast was bared to meet the storm.

A moment low those stern heads bowed
  In solemn, silent awe of prayer,
And then a wild shout, long and loud,
  Burst out upon the quivering air.

The spirit, roused, would sleep no more,
And each in turn, on bended knee,
With brow uncovered, reverent swore,
Eternal faith to Liberty!

Her torn and bleeding feet they dressed
In sandals wrought of maiden gold,
Into her trembling hand they pressed
The scepter from a Monarch's hold.

They broke the fetters that had led
Her captive in their cruel scars,
And bound upon her regal head
A flashing coronet of stars.

Their fortunes, lives, their all, alone,
They fastened, with her mantle's sheen;
Gave her their proud hearts for a throne,
And Liberty was crowned our Queen.

The deed a world then laughed to mock
Has swept in Majesty of State,
From Massachusetts' Plymouth Rock,
To California's Golden Gate.

Her heritage from sea to sea,
A land that owns no craven's right,
Where but to be is to be free,
Her flag the symbol of her might.

THE PASSING OF McKINLEY

Black, black, all black, our open door is closed
with ebon bars;
For woe like this there are no creeds, no bonds,
no social bourns:
Black, black, all black! half-masted hangs Old
Glory's stripes and stars—
The great republic mourns.

Low, low he lies, so low! the nation's chief, the
nation's pride;
So still the careful hands which steered his
country's danger past;
So dumb the tongue whose golden speech our
faith had justified:
God's seal of rest upon his breast, and peace,
and home, at last.

The shot that felled McKinley jarred the round
earth's rim;
It aimed at law, all law, it aimed at heaven's
high throne,—
For doth the firmament not move by law of Him,
And seed and harvest time from zone to zone?

Calamity stared grimly black the whole world in
the face
When anarchy, foul-brooded spawn of slime
and mud,
Spat her corroding venom to the highest place
And smeared the down-step to her den with
blood.

Not, not alone McKinley's life—brave life that
bore no stain,
Great statesman, gentlest husband, man of
Christian men—
He stood for us, each one, and in him were our
brothers slain,
And our dead fathers in his death did die again.

Black, black, all black, our open door is closed
with ebon bars;
For woe like this there are no creeds, no bonds,
no social bourns;
Black, black, all black! half-masted hangs Old
Glory's stripes and stars—
The great republic mourns.

CUBA

On her war beleaguered island
  Cuba stands and fights alone.
And her strangling cry for freedom
  Shakes the glory of a throne.

Stands beside her ruined altars
  Flame and sword engirded round,
Sees her maidens torn from shelter,
  Sacrilege on holy ground.

Flame and sword and desecration,
  Wrongs that Satan's self abhors,
All the barbarous, shameless, nameless
  Savagery of civil wars.

O, ye synod of the nations,
  Shall you, to this struggling land,
Give no sign of recognition,
  Raise no voice, uplift no hand?

Vain your teaching, false your preaching,
  While yon royal flag of Spain
With the cross of Christ upon it
  Floats above such fields of slain.

What has a man when it all is attained,—
Ambition, and glory, and glitter of fame—
Or wealth with the burden of folly it gained,
And burnt out his candle in winning the game.
Then darkness, and lo! at the end of the strife,
He has fought for a phantom his senses to cheat,
And missed all the sweetness and rhythm of life
And the flowers that grew at his feet.

"HE HITCHED HIS WAGON TO A STAR"

He hitched his wagon to a star
With brave intent,
He hitched his wagon to a star,—
The highest in the firmament.

He bent his shoulder to the spokes
And lifted with his might;
His feet were in the sordid mire,
His face was toward the light.

He heard the boom of breaking worlds
That starred the Milky Way;
He saw the wardens of the sun
Roll back the gates of day.

And though he never turned a wheel,
Felt not the hurt the vanquished feel;—
Through far high vistas vast and dim,
The highest star still beckoned him.

THE WOODMAN'S PHILOSOPHY

The woodman was tall, and brawny, and brown,
And broad of the shoulder, and muscled was he,
As a king of athletes;—not a club in the town
Could produce such a biceps. I came and sat down
To listen, and see,—
For the ring of his axe it was music to me.
He swung the broad blade with a curve at the start,
And a movement of wrist never learned of "Delsarte."
His knuckles shone white through the brown of his skin,
With a "whah!" went his breath as the sharp edge sank in
To the heart of the tree; and the sappy chips flew
And scattered and rattled like hail on the ground;
And the axe gave a "screak" as he twisted it round
To loosen the blade from the cleft it had made.
The back of his hand o'er his forehead he drew,—
His hand was so sinewy strong—Ah! I knew
The man was a king; I said to him, "Sire,
There's many a tree in your forest to fell,
Pray what do you do when you tire?"
"What do I?" said he, with a smile on his lip,
"When the handle gets slick and commences to slip,
I spit on my hands and take a fresh grip."

Not with saber, and cannon, and banners unfurled,
The new Alexander will conquer the world;—
He'll have sweat on his brow, and a smile on his lip,
And when fortune begins through his fingers to slip,
He'll "spit on his hands and take a fresh grip."

THE ORACLE

"This year, next year, now, never!"
  Shyly to herself, she said,
Tapered fingers, swift and clever,
  Pick to pieces daisy's head—
That its oracle may tell her
  When the day that she shall wed.

Fall the petals ever, ever,
  "This year, next year, now, never."

Pretty maiden, who shall scold her,
  If she sighs, and shakes her head!
Has the oracle not told her
  She shall never, never wed?

Half agrieved, she glances over
  Where the field and meadow meet—
Flushes redder than the clover
  Blossoms blushing at her feet.

Farmer's son, the nearest neighbor,
  —Stalwart he, and tall, and lithe—
Pausing in the swath his labor,
  Deftly whets his gleaming scythe;

Pulls his hat a little lower,
  Steps aside to let her pass,
Stammering asks if he may show her
  Where's a lark's nest in the grass:

Clasps her hand a little stronger
  Than necessity allows,
As their shadows growing longer
  Warn her she must find the cows.

Pretty maid in sunset glory,
  Thinks the daisy told a story.

THE LITTLE BROWN BIRD

A little bird sat in her nest on the ground,
A wee, wee little brown bird;
Sat thinking the song in the tall poplar tree
The sweetest she ever had heard.—
And up came a lump in the little bird's throat;—
She never could sing a note.

She looked at the bird in the tall poplar tree,
On its head was a wonderful crest;
Its wings they were spangled with velvet and gold
And red was the flame on its breast. —
Oh, never a feather of color had she,
She was brown as a bird could be.

The bright plumaged bird in the tall poplar tree
Sang longer and sweeter her strain.
The little brown bird drooped lower her head
And listened in envious pain.
Click! Bang! broke a murderous sound on the breeze;
It rustled the leaves on the trees.

And down through the rustling leaves came the bird.
There were stains on each leaf which she brushed.
The red on her breast it was redder with blood

And the voice of her singing was hushed.
The hunter had heard her wild song on the limb
And her breast made a target for him.

In penitent pity the little brown bird
Drew closer each sheltering wing;
And the wee baby birds hidden under her breast
Are glad that their mother can't sing.

A STAINED LILY

Some lilies grew by a brook-side,
  Tall and white, and cold,
And lifted up to the sunshine
  Their beautiful hearts of gold.

And near to their bed grew mosses,
  Rank vines, and flowers small,
And loathsome weeds, and thistles,
  And the sunlight warmed them all.

Anon, the proud white lilies
  Were gathered, one by one,
Each to crown a festal,
  The rarest under the sun.

One lily stopped to the brooklet,
  Her face she knew was fair,
And the face of the flowing water
  Mirrored her image there.

A hand, upraised in envy,
  Or carelessness, or jest,
Flung, from the turbid water,
  Mud, on the lily's breast.

And all the proud, white lilies
  Turned their faces away,
And nobody plucked that lily,
  And day, and night, and day

She wept for her ruined beauty:
And the dew-drops, and the rain,
Touched with her tears, in pity
Fell on the muddy stain.

Still stood she in her grieving,
Day, and night, and day;
Nor tears, nor dew, nor rain-drops
Could fade the stain away.

Pining in desolation,
Shunned by each of her kind,
Sought she a bitter solace
In creatures of coarser mind.

But the breath of the nettle stung her,
And the thistle's rude embrace
Burned her sensitive nature,
And scarred the fair, stained face.

Lower, drooped the lily,
And died at the feet of the weeds;
And only the tender mosses
Ministered to her needs.

And still the tall white lilies
Stand as cold, and proud,
And still the weeds and thistles
Against the lilies crowd.

Alike the same warm sunbeams
On weed and flower fall,
Alike by the same soil nourished,
And the great God made them all.

SOMEBODY'S BABY'S DEAD

A hearse all draped in mourning,
With white plumes overhead,
Bearing a little coffin—
Somebody's baby's dead.

Upon the satin cover
Some hand has placed a wreath,
White as the waxen features
Of the baby that lies beneath.

Out in the graveyard making
A rest for a shining head,
Somebody's heart is breaking,
Somebody's baby's dead.

Over a baby's coffin,
Heaping a mound of clay,
Somebody's hopes are buried
In that little grave today.

Somebody's home is dreary,
Somebody's sunshine fled;
Somebody's sad and weary,
Somebody's baby's dead.

INTERREGNUM

"Out of my way!" cried the brave New Year,
"Out of my way," sang he;
"Make way for my bride, Old Year; aside,
"Aside, Old Year!" sang he,—
"Make way for my bride and me."

He smiled as he tossed his locks of tawn,
Red crowned with the rosy glimpse of dawn.
He smiled and sang, and sang again,
And the Old Year sighed: "Amen,
Ah me, Amen!"—and he stepped aside.
But he opened his long black mantle wide
And close to his shriveling breast he pressed
The bride of the brave New Year.

THE SEA AND THE WIND

"Whither away?" sighed the Sea to the Wind,
"Where goeth, where bloweth thou?"
"I go," said the Wind, "to blow," said the Wind,
"The secret thou sighest now."

"Why bidest thou here?" said the Wind to the Sea,
"Why hidest thou here thy worth?"
"I bide," said the Sea, "to hide," said the Sea,
"The wrecks of thy cruel mirth."

SOCIETY

Go down in the perilous ocean deeps
  For the treasures hidden there.
Bring gems that have lain in a dead man's eyes
  To gleam in a woman's hair.
Slay a million birds—small mother birds—
  Till your soul of pity dies.
In the cup that is rusted with tears of woe
  Drink a toast to your lady's eyes.
Have faith in the wiles and the cheating smiles
  You hug to your foolish breast,
Thrust to the wall, beyond recall,
  The hearts that have loved you best.
Over and over, the rose, and the mold,
  The social tales of the world are told.

AN EMPIRIC

What is there ever in living—
  To live, and to live, and to live?
Nay; not the gift, but the giving—
  What hast thou, mortal, to give?

The songs that come up from the silence
  Of graves where Self lieth slain;
Gethsemane's red drops of passion,
  And the pitiful pleasure of pain—
  These are thy gifts, and thy gain.

MOTHER

I went away against her will,—
Home was so small, the world so wide,
And I so full of foolish pride.
Why should she take my going ill?
Why weight her heart with useless sighs,
And hurt me with her streaming eyes?

I came at last, I crossed the sea
To lay my head upon her breast
And tell her that our dear home nest
Was larger than the world to me.—
It may be in her silken shroud
She wondered why I wept aloud.

DEAD LOVE

There is no dead thing in this world so dead
As love that has been slain.
Think not that you
Can lightly toy with it, and set your foot
Upon its heart for pleasurance, and wound
The ground with its red blood, then bid it rise
And stand all blushing new again
Beside you.
Nay; though from the mouldy grave
Your power could take the skeleton, and all
Its mildewed joints habilitate with living flesh,
You, yet, could not bring dead love back to life.

FATE

Ruth was a laughing-eyed prattler,
  Thoughtless, and happy, and free;
She planted a seed in the garden,
  And said: "It will grow to a tree—
    A beautiful blossoming tree."

The birds and the squirrels played round it,
  As careless and merry was she,
But no tree ever grew from her planting—
  No beautiful, blossoming tree.

Ruth was a winsome-faced maiden,
  Happy, and hopeful, and free;
She planted a seed in the garden,
  And smilingly waited to see—
    A beautiful, blossoming tree.

She covered the ground up with flowers,
  The butterfly came, and the bee,
But no tree ever grew from her planting—
  No beautiful, blossoming tree.

Ruth was a pale, saddened woman,
  Thoughtful, with tremblings and fears;
She planted a seed in the garden,
  And watered the place with her tears—
    And watched it with tremblings and fears.

The winds and the rains beat upon it,
  The lightnings flashed o'er it in glee;
But she sleeps 'neath the tree of her planting—
  A beautiful, blossoming tree.

UNDER THE SEA

A fisherman rocked in his boat on the tide
And dropped his net in the sea,
He sang as he worked, and the rising tide
Drifted his voice to the water-side—
Echoed his voice on the lea.

A maiden mended the fisherman's nets
At the water-side on the lea,
She listened and longed as she patient wrought,
And no sound was so sweet, the maiden thought,
As the fisherman's song on the sea.

A maiden stood in the misty light
Gazing out o'er the water wide,
Straining her eyes through the paling light,
And around her feet in the deepening night,
Crept slowly the rising tide.

The mermaids braided the maiden's hair
Under the depths of the sea—
Braided her long, bright golden hair
Into a shimmering wonderful snare
Under the fathomless sea.

The fisherman smiled as he sang his song,
For a maid too fond and fair—
A mermaid floated the waves along,
She caught the soul of the fisherman's song
In a net of golden hair.

And ever and e'er when the twilight falls,
And the moonlight pales on the sea,
A voice on the ear of the fisherman falls,
A song that his soul and his sense enthralls
Drifts over the lonesome sea.

And deaf to the warning that death is there,
He follows the song of the sea;
But he comes not back for a shimmering snare,
A wonderful weft of golden hair
Is waiting him under the sea.

THE UNDERTONE OF SONG

A broad flat rock the creek goes rippling round,
Where overhanging leaves make pictures in the sun.
The silence is not broken by a sound
Save that of Autumn's making; surely one
Might stay and dream, and dreaming might forget
That there were aught in all the world to do
But dream!
A mother quail and her full score
Of pretty running fledgelings stop, then whir into
The safer undergrowth which skirts the water shore.
A cone from yon tall pine falls heavily, the spoil
Of some marauding squirrel's teeth; and through
Far hights a mountain vulture sails a sea of blue.
These do but trend the fancies to a dream;
And yet,
That strenuous straight line of rusty ants along
The streamlet's bank keeps faith with never ending human toil,—
Its moving rhythm the undertone of song.

TO A MUMMY

Did death come when that form was young and
fair
And lissome, and awake to flattery's praise,
Or when, with heavy step and whitened hair,
Thou'dst lingered out life's longest span of days?
And did that heart with joy or grieving swell?
Who now can tell?

Wast thou a sorceress Cleopatra, with
The splendor of all Egypt in thine eyes?
Or didst thou walk, Diana-like, the world,
A bloodless statue made in woman's guise?
Thou senseless thing! What matters it to thee?
And what to me?

O shrunken, shriveled shape. If I could bring
Thy roundness back, the blood into thy cheek,
And all life's spell once more upon thee fling,
What wouldst thou tell me? If thy tongue could
speak,
The secrets of the pyramids wouldst thou
Reveal, or laugh at Israelitish mother's tears,
Or shuddering with horror tell me how
It feels to lie entombed a thousand years?

SAPPHO TO PHAON

God, God! How I have loved thee, Phaon,—
My soul's husband.
When the brilliancy of Mitylene turned
Full face to me and crowned me queen,
One kiss of thine was more
Than all of Greece's glory.
And when thou camest forth
To win thyself a name, and fame,
I was so glad—so glad that thou wast great,
So proud to be thy lesser mate.
I would be thy left hand, and thou my right.
When Athens wrote the name of Phaon on her walls
The name of Sappho would be wrote beside it.
Phaon and Sappho ever spoken in one breath.
Phaon and Sappho one in life and death.
Ten thousand liars had prated since the world began
Of love, one love, one woman and one man.
And measuring thy love by mine
I dreamed that it could be.
Man's love is but a winged fool that flies
From pretty face to pretty face,
Nor finds a strong abiding rest in any place.
A sensuous shapely form, and well-tricked eyes
Will handicap a soul in any race
Where love's the prize
And man is umpire in the case.

Phaon's name is on the tongue of every one,
Alcaeus and Stesichorus, they pale in Phaon's
sun.
And 'tis not Sappho walks by Phaon's side.
'Tis her—not me—that Lesbos names with
thee.
But though, while yet the dew is on thy fame
Thou hast forgotten me
And spurned the wondrous sweetness of our love,
I tell thee, Phaon, I am greater still than thou;
And I will live when thou art only known
Because that Sappho loved thee.

HER CHRISTMAS GIFT

"I have nothing to give you, darling,
For a Christmas gift tonight,
Not even the tiniest present
To keep my memory bright;
Nothing at all to give you
Only my love," she said.
She said it so wistfully, so sad,
And she blushed, and hung her head.

We were poor, as the world would count it—
My little wife and I,—
And the Christmas time, with its joyous chime,
Neglectful passed us by.

Only her love to give me!
Oh! she could not, could not see
That she gave from the source of giving,
Her Christmas gift to me.
Only her love she gave me,
And rich as a king am I,
And there is not gold enough in the world
Her Christmas gift to buy.

AH ME!

She reached her pretty hands to me,
Ah Me!
She reached her pretty hands to me,—
She held them out imploringly.
A fox glove grew just where she stood
Within the border of the wood.
Ah Me!

And then—oh, then, I could not go,
Ah Me!
And then I could not—would not—go,
I turned away and left her so.
Left her, her pretty hands out held,—
Her heart with pent-up grieving swelled,
Ah Me!

Within the border of the wood,
Ah Me!
Within the shadow of the wood
The fox glove grows yet where she stood.
And I could go—and would—if she
Would reach her pretty hands to me.
Ah Me!

I HAVE FOLDED THEM UP AND PUT THEM AWAY

I have folded them up, and put them away,
Each dainty garment you used to wear,
The little kid shoes with the tasseled tops,
And the long bright lock of your golden hair;
And hot tears fell unchecked, untold,
Over garment, and shoe, and tress of gold.

The little dishes—the china cups
And saucers, and plates with gilted bands,
You washed them last and piled them here
In the painted box with your dear, small hands.

The music-book with the lesson marked,
Your fingers touched with such fairy ease,
Ran over the notes, then tired, and failed,
And fell from the task on the ivory keys.

And I found a letter among the things
So idly thrown on an idle stand,
"My precious Mamma," the lines began,
Wrote in the scrawl of a childish hand.
O, I little dreamed when I read it over,
And carelessly laid it here away,
That through blinding tears for your sweet dead face,
I would read the letter again today.

Every place in this desolate house,
From night to night, and from dawn to dawn,
Wherever I go, wherever I look,
There is something to mind me that you are gone.

So I folded them up and put them away,
And locked them out of my sight forever;
And I have not spoken your name since then
To keep from thinking.—Vain endeavor!

When has turning a key forgetfulness brought?
And who can limit the flight of a thought?

Everywhere in this beautiful world,
From night to night, and from dawn to dawn,
Wherever I go, whatever I see,
There is something to mind me that you are gone.

If when we left a loved, or loving one,
We knew that surely one of us would die
Before another dawn, or set of sun,
We would not ever lightly say "Good-bye."
And yet we know
Some day it must be so.

MY SHIPS HAVE COME FROM THE SEA

You are watching a ship, Oh, maiden fair,
With parted lips and wistful air.
The ship that out from the sheltered bay
With white sails spread moves slow away;
And I know, my girl, the thoughts that burn
In your heart are of that ship's return.
Ah! I know so well how your pulses beat,
With the great sea sobbing at your feet;
And the yellow stars in southern skies
Are brighter not than your love-bright eyes.

I, too, have stood on the sea-wet sand,
And tearful waved a farewell hand,
And watched with many a longing prayer.
My face, like yours, was young and fair,
And my eyes were bright as the diamond's glow,
They've lost their sparkle long ago.
I stand alone on the beach today,
Watching the ships that sail away;
But never a sail from over the sea
The flowing tide will bring to me.
My ships have come from sea.

The first was builded with childish hand;
It floated away a castle grand—
A beautiful bubble with rainbow hues,
Lined with the crystal of morning dews;
To break at my feet by the sunny sea,
A beautiful bubble came back to me—
Came back from my ship at sea.

I fashioned another in gladsome way
And sent it forth on a summer day.
I see it yet, a fairer craft,
Never at danger mocking laughed;
Its shrouds were the sheen of happy hours,
Its helm a wreath of orange flowers.
And I freighted it down with love and truth,
The golden hopes of my sunny youth.
Had it lived the storm—but it could not be,
A stranded wreck on the surf-washed lea,
My ship came home from sea.

And then a smiling fairy bark,
A fragile, precious-freighted ark,
Out on life's ocean drear and dark.
And I prayed to God as I never before,
To shield this bark from the tempest's roar;
To spare me this—but it could not be.
A little coffin came back to me—
Came back from my ship at sea.

With reckless hand I launched again
A venture on the treacherous main
Bound for ambition's dizzy court,
Sailed from a hopeless, loveless port.
With gloomy walls whose silence chilled,
With ghostly haunting memories filled,
With never a breath of the roses dead;
Never a rest for a weary head,
Never a dream of a sweet to be,
Hopeless, loveless still, to me,
My ship came home from sea.

The last, and least, of all the ships
Fashioned with hands, and heart, and lips,
I pushed from shore with its decks untrod,
And the freight it bore was my faith in God.
I recked not whither its way, nor when,
Nor how, if ever, 'twould come again.
And this, alone, came back to me.
Rich-laden from the stormy sea.
And so, sweet maiden, while your dreams
Paint fairest all that fairest seems,
I stand with you and watch today
The ship that sails from the shore away;
But never a sail from over the sea
The flowing tide will bring to me—
My ships have come from sea.

BREAK DOWN THE DOOR OF THE JUBILEE

Break down the door of the Jubilee,
Let the penitent years file in,
And with knees to earth in the sacristy
Unshoulder their loads of sin.
To your Jubilee ye hundred years,
Your stoles are dabbled with blood and tears,
Red, red with the wrongs of men,—
With the lust of men, and the trust of men;—
With the gorge of gold, forsooth,
And the hearts that broke 'neath its glittering yoke
In the marvelous faith of youth.
Pass through, pass in, old years, and then
Turn back and seal your door again.

Break down the door, oh, thou white new year!
Break down the door, "the Holy door,"
That never was struck by mace before,
Brave priest, you have naught of sin nor fear.
But pass you in in reverence prone—
Lo! Truth stands naked there, alone.—
Look once, and die, for so it is writ.—
But you've opened the door and out of it
The light of her face will shine
Till the morning stars shall sing again
Of "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

EASTER LILIES

With eyes all dim and downcast,
  She stood at the foot of the cross,
Bowing, in deep submission,
  Under the weight of her loss,
And she held in her hand a lily,
  Close at the foot of the cross.

A beautiful, perfect lily,
  To lay at the Savior's feet;
Sign in her silent sorrow—
  Of her worship—passion sweet—
A snowy, a sinless offering,
  To lay at the Savior's feet.

"Behold thy mother and brethren!"
  A voice came up from the crowd
To the ear of the dying Savior—
  The Savior murmuring aloud:
"These are my mother and brethren!"
  Looked on the muttering crowd.

And the mother's heart that was in her
  Swelled with a jealous fear,
And down in the cup of the lily
  Dropped she a burning tear—
Dropped on the snow of the lily
  The blot of a selfish fear.

Dropped in the cup of the lily
  A tear that was hot with pain,
And the snowy heart of the lily
  Was snowy never again.
The wax-white heart had withered
  In the salt of its burning pain.

And ever the beautiful lilies
  Are placed at the feet of the Lord.
Baptized with the tear of a mother,
  Keep they, a sinless ward—
Sign of a silent worship
  At the cross of the risen Lord.

And ever and ever the lilies
  We lay with a smile or a tear,
A sacred gift on the altar
  Of the idols we worship here,
But deep in each lily's chalice
  Is the yellow stain of a tear.

THE CHRISTMAS CROSS

No longer red, its arms, with Christ's red blood.
No longer bound with superstitions fears.—
Self-slaved humanity has washed it in
    Two thousand years of tears.
Strip it of creed, and ritual, and all
Its mouth-made garmenture let fall
    As fashions that are old.
On Calvary's summit let the mad world see
    God's sign of love,—and Christian liberty.

GENESIS

I came from the Unknowable.
I was.
I saw the first far reddening glimmer of the light
Whose whirling fires begot the sun.
And when this globe of earth swung darkling
into space
Through all its changing parentage of life, came I,
Till man, evolved of me, awoke, walked forth
And sunned his forehead in the smile of God.
All things in him expressed, all things were his;
His the adjusting of the belted zones,
The unmade centuries, the cradles, and the
thrones.

But failing recognition of me in himself,
The red instinct of his four-footed time
Strives with his higher element of life.
His lust's desire his law of Right, he makes,
His punier brother to the shambles takes,
Himself of his own heritage himself despoils;
And warring with his soul he pawns his breath
And passes back into the dust of death.

And I?—I come again, again,
Twice twenty times as many times again, I come;
And then, one day, a god is born.
And many wonder at the marvel of his power,
And bow to do him homage, crying "Hail! All
Hail!"
Believing me a new thing yet beneath the sun.
Or by a more ignoble impulse moved, they say:
"A brand-new devil straight from hell is he."
And in the sleeve of my flesh garmenture, I
laugh,—
So old am I.
For I am Love—the Atom of Creation, I.—
I give each man his Christ to bless or crucify.

A THOUGHT

There's nothing dies;—the words you speak,
The kiss you pressed upon a baby's cheek,
The deeds you do, the thoughts you think, stamp
all too surely on your face
Their separate identities; and leave in space
A heritage for other souls to wear,—
For other hearts to bear.

A MOOD

And so, dear dupe, you think that you
By your own truth have kept him true?
That moulded in such loyal mould
Yourself, your thoughts can lift and hold
Him to your loftier level? Then
Christ had not need to die for men.
Well, keep your noble thought, be true,
And guard your ignorance. And pray—
Pray God at night and dawn and day—
The pain of wisdom may not come
To you; and strike you dumb; and numb
Your senses till they die; and you
Have weariness of being true.
Say wrong is right and let it go.
And maybe you can make it so.

ALL HALLOWE'EN

A black cat sits on the back yard fence,
And he yowls in the dead o' night;
There's a bat with wings stretched wide and tense
Across the pale moonlight,
A weird wind haunts the restless town,
And ghosts walk up and down.

UNDER THE GRASS

And I must lie out there under the grass
The wind ripples over the hill.
In dewy green, or in dusty brown.
Must lie there, and lie there, and lie there still
When the winter rain beats down,
And down, and into my slim white bones
Dissolving the dust of me.
And filtering through to the sun and the dew
And the light of the stars, will pass
Again to the roots of grass.
And somebody, someday, will plant him a tree
And a grape and a rose in the dust of me.

BENDITA

"If God were not so far away," she sighed,
"To reach His lowest place, I might have tried.
So high, so far from me His heaven lies,
I may not toward it even lift my eyes,"
She said,
And slowly, lowly, bent her head.

Resigning all the glory of the skies,
She turned to earth her sorrow-smitten eyes
And sought its best, and made the best of all
That chanced into her toiling hands to fall.—
Nor thought of self, nor any chance that she might take,—
But just to be a witness for His sake.
Then waked one day amidst life's sudden stir
To find the high and far-off God was leading her.

I wonder if ever the angel who holds
The book where all secrets are hid,
Writes for us the things we were trying to do,—
Or only the things that we did?

TOASTS

TO TRUTH

The most beautiful naked thing in the world,—
And the most carefully clothed.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Were all love's joys, its smiles and kisses,
Were all its hopes, and dreams, and blisses—
All that a million years could think,—
Imbrued into one cup of dew
And given to me, a toast to drink,
I'd drink that toast to you.

TO CALIFORNIA

Her breath is the purest, the wine of her mouth
Is richer than Circe's of old,
Her sandals are laced with the silk of the South,
Her bosom is woven with gold.

If I and you no more were said,
And thee and me no longer read,
The ego of all Being would be dead.—
If thee and me no more were read,
And I and thou no longer said.

"TO YOU"

When you return to your green hills
And all the starry heavens shine,
Or dawn your dusky canyon thrills
To life again; or may be when
Its little rippling rivulets run
To softest music in the sun,
Or roars the wind in rougher rhyme,
You'll think of me—just me—some time.
In that dear moment pause, and then
Let some sweet memory of me
Have all your heart and constancy.
And I will come to you that day
Though I be half the world away.

"DISTANCE IS CRUEL"
vs.
"DISTANCE IS KIND"

"Distance is cruel," cruel, you say,
Was it distance that kept you away—
Was it all distance? I say.

The man who is thirsty, or hungry for bread,
Does he count the miles to a feast?
Or dally with time till his banquet is dead
And many the miles have increased?

Death came and took the light out of my heart,
And stood by my bedside for me.
I reached him my hands but he smiled and
passed on,
Death must be cruel some way.

Grief came and found me
And swathed her cloak round me
And bound me a mummy from head unto feet,
And trouble went double with sorrow
Today, and tomorrow, and yesterday.

Poverty laughed when I bolted my door,
Stood by the door outside
And laughed at my pitiful pride;
Peeped through the keyhole and laughed
Till he rattled the bones in his thin yellow skin.

Aye; they all came—a clamorous crew—
Though each had been rover
Ten times the round of the round earth over,
But never, never came you.

If "distance is cruel" is true,
Then you who thus reasoned were cruelty's self,
And distance was kinder than you.

Out of the dimmers of distance
One came to the desert to me.
He kissed and caressed me and blessed me.
O, his kisses were warm on my face,—
My face was so cold.

Over my graves in the desert
He planted white blossoms of peace,
And peace was surcease.
My heart that was shriveled to die
Grew large with the largeness of loving
And the glory came back to the sky.
Distance was lost in the spaces of places that make it,—
And distance, I take it, is only the sieving of time.

DEAD DAYS

Do dead days ever more return—
The ghosts of days, I mean,
When incense smokes and candles burn
With shrouded Love between?

And if they do, come thou again,
Touch palms with me, I pray,
And turn the whole world back to Then,—
Dear ghost of one dead day!

WHEN WILL MY SOUL GO?

O, when will my soul go—and where will it go?
And what is my soul when it goes?
Will it rise with the rain-clouds, and fall in the rain,
And exhale from the heart of a rose?
Who knows?

WHEN THE ROSES GO

You tell me you love me, you bid me believe
That never such lover could mean to deceive.
You rave o'er my eyes, and my beautiful hair,
And swear to be true;—as they always swear.—
But the wrinkles will grow and the roses go,
And lovers are rovers oft, you know,—
When the roses go.

I have heard of a woman sweet and fair,
With lips of love, and shining hair,
And you pledged to her on your bended knee
The selfsame vows you make to me,
But the wrinkles will grow and the roses go.
How she learned that trouble comes, you know,—
When the roses go.

You hold my hand in your thrilling clasp,
And my heart grows weak in your subtle grasp,
Till I blush in the light of your tender eyes
And dream of a far-off paradise.
But the wrinkles will grow, and the roses go.
I will answer you, love—my love—you know,—
When the roses go.

PEARLIE IS GONE AWAY

No papers, cut with the scissors,
  Scattered over the floor;
No scampering feet on the stairway,
  No finger-marks on the door.
How still and lonesome the house is,
  The sunshine looks paler today,
And the wind round the corners is whispering:
  "Pearlie is gone away."

There in the farthest corner
  Is her "sailor-hat" on the floor,
Where she tossed it yesterday evening
  As she bounded in at the door.
Somehow I couldn't take it
  And put it away today,
And a plate of mud cakes in the cupboard,
  I couldn't throw them away.

"Is she dead?" did you ask me? No, no!
  Could I sit here so calmly then?—
Just gone on a visit. Some day
  She will come to me again.
But the house is so still and so lonesome,
  And the sun shines so coldly today,
And the wind round the corners keeps whis-
    pering:
  "Pearlie is gone away."

A PICTURE

A little maid, with sweet brown eyes
  Upraised to mine in sad surprise;
I held two tiny hands in mine,
  I kissed the little maid farewell.
Her cheeks to deeper crimson flushed,
  The sweet, shy glances downward fell;
From rosy lips came—ah! so low—
  "I love you—do not go!"

I see it through the lapse of years—
This picture, oftimes blurred with tears.
No tiny hands in mine are held,
  No sweet brown eyes my pulses wake—
Only in memory a voice
  E'er bids me stay for love's sweet sake.

TWO MUST BE TWO

"They twain shall be one flesh," the Bible said;
The minister with solemn words pronounced us one
That long-ago, sweet hour when we were wed;
And I—I thought it had been done,—
I thought that we were one.
That he would hold my hand in his
All our life's journey through—
That we in deed and word and thought must be
Each to the other true;
Each to the other all that life desired
Of love or of companionship of sex or soul,
A unison of aim and hope and plan—
No other woman in the world for him,
For me no other man.

One day—a strange and cruel day—he stopped
And told me I must walk alone; that two
Were never one, nor ever could be one.
And then I saw that near unto the path he trod
There was another pathway, parallel, but soon
Diverging. And it was not in the one
Wherein he stood that he placed me.
Far back along the way which we had come
I saw a woman's tracks, made step by step
In harmony with his; in sharp, swift agony I knew
That they would go with his until the end,
And never weary him; for they were Friendship's tracks;
And Friendship walked in freedom by his side.
In that cold, strange, new path, where he placed me—
A burden lifted from his weary breast—
Were many heaps of slender bleaching bones.

The daylight fled; black night, without a star,
Came down and shrouded me.
I groped around, I tried to see, I tried to walk,
But only stumbled over those cold, slender bones.
Then all the souls of womanhood, that once
Had habited those slim white bones, came near
And tried to help me. But my feet were weak
And heavy from long uselessness. My eyes
Had learned to see but in Love's light,
And from its cradle-time Love had been taught
That in a woman's breast—
"They twain shall be one flesh;"
It never had been shown to walk alone,
It could not even think alone.

I sat down helpless where I was; then all around
I heard a shiver like the quivering of reeds
Upon a river when the night-wind blows up stream,
And from those heaps of bones there rose a cry,
So strong, so deep and thousand-voiced and long,
That all the darkness trembled.
In its slow, shivering wail, I heard these words:
"Why does the Holiest of Holies lie?
Twain cannot be one flesh;
Why is the sacredest of human ties
Bound with such red mockery of Truth?
Friendship hath only feet with which to climb—
Yet climbs to heaven. Love hath both feet and wings,
But Falsehood's swaddling bandages have made of her
So frail a thing that man must carry her,
Or set her down and let her die.
Go back and tell thy sister woman not to love
Till Love hath torn the bandage from her eyes

And learned the power of her wings,
And taught her feet to walk as free and proudly all
Life's way as Friendship walks.
Go, go thou back, and tell to whom thou findest
there
That twain are not one flesh—
That two shall not be one."

I heard and bowed my head, and wept in wonderment,
And wondering, I died.
And there is one more heap of slim white bones
For some one else to stumble over when
To her, too suddenly, shall come the knowledge
that
Two must be two.

Yet my lone soul, unsatisfied,
Knows if there had been such another love as
mine,
And these had known and loved each other,
Two had been one by law of Nature's self.
There would no longer then have been the need
Of any far-off Heaven, and death had ceased—
Heaven would have come to dwell with them,
And they for very joy could not have died.

AN INWARD GLANCE

Like waves of tides that higher reached than
others went
To meet the fulling moon's impellant light,
And with their depth and force and purpose spent
Left only foam to brown upon the hight,—
So are my thoughts.

IN A VISION

Each was as fair as the other,
  And both, as my life, were dear,
And the voices that lisped me "Mother,"
  Heaven's music to my ear.

One faded from life and mother,
  And died in a winter dawn,
And I turned me away from the other
  And wept for the child that was gone.

Then I lay in a wierd sleep vision,
  Before me an earth dark scene,
And the land of the Sweet Elysian.—
  And only a grave between.

One child soft called me "Mother"—
  Out from the shining door—
And smiled and beckoned; the other
  Played by itself on the floor.

One's path, to my inward seeing,
  Was light with a wondrous day;—
It led to the hights of Being,
  And an angel showed the way.

The other lay where Marah's
  Hot sands with snares are strewn,
Through many a darksome forest
  And the way was roughly hewn.

A faith to my soul was given—
The wierd sleep vision o'er—
And I turned from the child in heaven
To the child that played on the floor.

CORONALS

I twined you a wreath of the ivy vine,
  You plucked me a red rose wet with dew—
You hold in your hand, and I hold in mine
  Red rose ashes and bitter rue.

Fortune's wheel turned round and round,
And you went up and I went down.

The chaplet of bay that your brow entwined
  You proudly wore;—but I knew, I knew
That you held in your hand, as I held in mine,
  Red rose ashes and bitter rue.

You brought me a gift from the Avalon shores,
  I gave you the heart of a lily-blow;—
I hold in my hand, and you hold in yours,
  A cypress wreath and ashes of snow.

Fortune's wheel turned round and round,
And I went up, and you went down.

Of the sentient draught that flattery pours
  I have drained my meed—but you know, you
    know,
That I hold in my hand, as you hold in yours,
  A cypress wreath and ashes of snow.

INCONSISTENCE

She gave me once a blood red rose and kissed
My cheek. Contemptuously I met her touch
And dropped the flower as though a serpent hissed
Among its leaves. I blamed her much
For some things which I knew; nor thought that I
Could less that smile if she should die.

Today a wild flower white as snow I brought,
And laid it on her breast; and then I thought
How mean it was to thrust a gift on her
Who could not hand, or lip, or eyelid stir,
To fling it back;—and was it dew,—that clear
Drop quivering on the blossom,—or a tear?

BUT ONE LITTLE STOCKING

But one little stocking! There used to be two
  Hung up for the Christmas treasures;
I dropped in a tear as I filled it anew—
  Too sad are the Christmas pleasures.

O sainted, O sweet Mother Mary!
  For motherhood's blessing and dearth,
Put a gift in the stocking in Heaven
  And say it's from mother on earth.

MY SOUL AND I

What were you, soul, before that you were I?
Were you by death—some other form of death—
Unburdened from some other shape, in some—
Uncounted time (which I almost remember)
A co-existent quantity with atoms of the stars,
Or were you but a sigh of Nature's breath
And had to have embodiment to make
Death possible?

O, passion bounded, sorrow tossed
Poor Soul!
What have you gained or what have you lost
By wearing flesh's thrall?
Enough to pay the troublous cost
Of staying here—of coming here at all?
And if you were a soul and knew you were
Why hither journeyed you?
Was there not in vast space a place
More fitting for a soul?

Poor Soul,
If creeds are true, and you
Were fashioned by the Mighty Maker's hand,
In His own Image made,
A thing unsullied as the Maker's self—
White-winged with countless millioned happy years
To sing His praises in,
Why came you here to mix identities with me?
To worry through the toil and moil of many years,
To wash yourself in tears
And die at last sore wounded, sullied, too,
Your white wings clipped, just for the slender chance
Of getting back to where and what you were.
Poor Soul!

ACROSS THE GREAT DIVIDE

I never hear the night wind blow,
Or see a red rose pearled with dew,
Or hear a lark's song in the dawn
But that I think of you,—
Of you, hear heart, of you.

MY BROTHER

(Leonard Morris Hilyard)

Gone out into the darkness, and the night—
Gone, gone alone, forever into the unknown—
My Brother.

Long nights and nights he waited for the dawn,
And watched the sunlight glancing down the hills,
Well-knowing he must go; but kept it closely in his breast,
And hid his pain lest it should fright us that he loved.
And then one day he smiled, and went away—
My Brother.

Say not that he is dead and lives not anywhere
That potent individuality,
Nor in some far-off other world awaits
The Everlasting,—all forgetting this.
No morning dawns, or sun goes down, or rain or wind,
Or war of elements, or summer stillness comes,
But that I see his face—
My Brother.

O, there are hurts too deep for words.
And there are silent rooms in memory
Whose emptiness would break our hearts again
To venture in.
Rest unto thee, and peace, and blessedness, and love; Amen!
There was no braver, kinglier-hearted man than thou—
My Brother.

THE FAIRY OF THE HEIGHTS

She's the winsomest fairy, with bonnie brown
eyes
That twinkle so merrily, then look so wise.
Each hair of her head in the sunshine was
traced,
It's the vividest gold from her crown to her
waist—
Never troubled with tie strings of bonnet or hat.
And the speckled fawn looks from his browse in
the flat,
To wonder what manner of comrade is that
With a brown little hand reached to give him a
pat.
She is friends with the squirrels and birds, and
she knows
Where the shy rabbit hides, and the Christmas
tree grows.

She sits where the spring ripples over its brink,
And watches the bees and the butterflies drink.
She puts her ear close to the old redwood tree
To hear what it says to the wind from the sea;
She could tell you its tale of a shepherd and
staff—
The redwood's four thousand,—she's nine and a
half.
She will point out the spot where the full moon
first spills
Its flood of pure silver to burnish the hills,
For she's friends with the squirrels and birds
and she knows
Where the shy rabbit hides and the Christmas
tree grows.

VALENTINE

All night at your heart's door my heart had stood,
  But did not knock (you might have let me in,
And that, before the world's tribunal, would
  Have been a sin).

From out the somewhere world of dreams, my soul
  Saw yours come back into its sleeping clay;
Then out into the new-born dawn, I stole
    And went away.

It was a soul your waking eyes first saw, and so
    How could you know!

NOT ACCLIMATED

I hate you, Southland of the southern west,
I say I hate you! All your hot brown breast
Is dried and shrivelled up. Your wide hot mouth
Breathes only scorching desolating drouth.
Your mountains toss their jagged peaks, and stop
Just short of majesty. Your rivers drop
Beneath the sands of their own beds, and seep
Through mud and roots and rotted things, and
creep
Like cowards to the sea. I say I hate you!

QUESTION

Shall I, because you stabbed me in the back
And killed my friendship with a traitor's blow,
Shall I behind your armor strike, and show
Myself a traitor too,
To even things with you?

I HAVE NEVER, YOU THINK, A SERIOUS THOUGHT

I have never, you think, a serious thought,
My friend—
Never a moment by sorrow taught
Its sympathy to lend.
Can you by the light of laughing eyes
See all there is in the heart that lies
Under a smile, my friend?

Forever wrapped in their glittering shrouds
Of snow,
Are the mountain peaks that touch the clouds;
But ah, my friend, you know
There are smoldering fires that never rest,
And earthquakes hid in the mountain's breast,
Under the cold, white snow.

UNANSWERED

O dear, dear, eyes, now shut to sight and sense.
White folded hands, at rest for evermore,
Can you not give me back one look from thence?
Nor open once, just once, that silent door?

If I could have one glimpse beyond it given,
To know you live, and love, and blame me not;
My mad, mad soul would give its hopes of heaven,
And die, and be forgot.

QUERY

It is so precious sweet to be a fool,
A pretty little petted simpleton,
And let the great big fellow you have won
Believe that he is captor, and his rule
Imperative, while round your finger tips
You wind him with a smile or pout of lips.
Who would be large and wise, and boastful rule,
When it's so "cute" to be a "little fool?"

THE RED WINDS BLOW

The red winds blew around the world.
The gaunt wolf rose, and sniffed, pricked forward
pointed ears;
The vulture sharped her beak; Death held his
breath!
And dissonantly twanged the music of the
spheres.

The red winds blew. The nations stirred un-
easily,
As when a loitering zephyr ruffles summer leaves,
Then swift, and sudden as the gathered tempest
strikes,
Ten times a million men rushed at each other's
throats
And drenched the fair earth with each other's
blood.
Ten times a million Christian men, with songs
of home
Upon their tongues; each praying to the self-
same God
For strength to slay, and slay, and kill and kill
His brother men across the reeking trenches, till
No man was left to lift a hand opposing him.
For what? and how? and why? and why?
To claim a city by another claimed, mayhap?
To step across a line marked on a map?
For greed of place? For power to rule God's
unmarked seas?
Or this? or this? or that? or that? or these?
The tramp of armies shakes the smiling lands.
Such armies! God of Hosts, till now, Thou hast
not seen.

Death rides before them with red dripping hands;
The roar of breaking worlds their bodeful coming tells;
The bare earth moans where grew sweet fields of gold and green.
The carrion eater slinks close in their shadow's hem,
And Famine, stark and hungry-eyed, stalks after them.
The red winds blow.

Whose sons are these that sail the skies in winged ships,
And hurl down from the blue of heaven, hot, hideous death,
To break upon the lullabies of sleepy babes;
To burst amidst the fleeing multitudes,
Rend limbs from limbs, tear quivering flesh from shrieking bones,
And in High Places thank God for the gruesome crime?
Whose sons are they that plant the seas with death?
Foul, awful death; that lies in wait for human prey,
Laughs when the lordly dreadnought glides too near
(Itself in search of other human prey),
And springs annihilation in a breath!
Leaving, of all the splendid armament's defense,
But streaks of crimson scum upon the broadening waves.
The red winds blow.

Whose sons are they, made in Thy image, Thou,
O God!
Not Thine? Not brothers of Thy Son, Whose
way
Was gentleness; Whose touch was benediction.
Nay;
Not Thine, not Thine!
Nor thine, thou carnate devil, watching from
thy hell,
The hell that out-hells thine! In thy unholiest
dreams
Thou could'st not have devised the 'cursed
schemes
For human woes, and horrors, these have done.
Thou art outstripped in cunning—out of date—
Too old of fashion. Slip back in thy spuny hell,
They are not thine.

Down through the ages they have come;
Red souls of war, obsessioning the earth,—
They were the miscreated sons of her who sat
Upon the seven-headed scarlet colored beast
Which sat upon the waters of the Seven Seas.
To whom the kings of earth came craftily,
And drank abomination from her gilded cup.
Her smile preceded Babylon,
And on her brow was written "Mystery."
The red winds blow.

And Thou, O gentlest Peace, in what far guarded
place
Dost hide and hide the pity of thy face?
Let loose thy snow-winged dove, to rise
And fly across the seething blood-mad world.
To flutter over fields where that dread Silence is!
To light on upturned faces blearing at the skies
And curiously peck at dead men's eyes.
The red winds blow.

A PEACE CONFERENCE

Once the great white bear of Russia,
  Close beside his polar seas,
Called the beasts and birds to counsel
  That the beasts and birds would please
Cease to war upon each other;
  Appetite for blood should cease,
And all sovereignty be given
  To the sweet, white dove of Peace.

The great bald eagle from his aerie
  On the mighty Rockies' crest,
Lauded peace while he was preening
  Blood of battle from his breast.

Royally the Albion lion
  Licked and licked his velvet paws,
Roaring Peace to Afric jungles
  With blood and feathers on his claws.

Came the great black-breasted eagle
  Swooping from the Baltic's shore.
Bait for fish in Orient waters
  In his peaceful talons bore.

Then the great white bear of Russia
  Asked all beaks and claws to sheath;
Asked, and smiled, and showed in smiling,
  His own cub's blood upon his teeth.

Far away upon her desert
  In her solitude enthroned,
Peace sat desolate and weeping—
  And her white dove moaned and moaned.
Slowly, through the hot sun toiling,
  An aged worm with ways infirm,
Stopped its homeward crawl to listen;
  And the white dove ate the worm.

INTUITION

I kissed her eyes and cheeks, and then
I told her I would come again.
I told her I would come, and then
I kissed her eyes and cheeks again.

Coat falsehood over thick with wit,
Wrap reasoning round it—yards of it—
And there are eyes will pierce it through
And smile your falsehood back at you.

I fancy she was one of these,
For though I swore by shores and seas,—
Aye; though my vows in heaven I booked—
She looked at me—just looked and looked.

Some minds toil hard, up-hill and far
To find the truth, but some there
Who feel the truth within them grow
And know,—not knowing how they know.

CALIFORNIA

She was not born a babe, to suckle strength;
A woman, gazing down her land's broad length,
Stepped from the pines out on the fall-brown grass;—
The grizzly bear stood back to let her pass.
And Fremont's cannon thundered wide and far,
Old Glory's azure had another star.

THE OPENING OF THE CALIFORNIA POPPIES

To the West, and below where the snow summit looms,
Stood an army of pike-pointed lances of green,
So slenderly fashioned they scarce could be seen.
How could they, such lilliput lances of green?
The plains and the foothills were spotted all over
With pieds of blue camas, and tall lupin plumes
In reaches of purple;
And blushes of bloom of the clover.
And smelled sweet as bee-bread.
But the meadow lark laughed in his ripple of tune,
The meadow lark knew what would happen at noon.
There were stamens of gold and petals of flame
Wrapped up in each green little conical cap,
That slowly slipped up, and slipped up, till it came
Off at the top with a snap!
And the petals unrolled, flame, orange, and gold,
And airily, fairily, swung on the stem,
Till the land was afire with the color of them.

THE GOLDEN GATE

Down by the side of the Golden Gate
    The city stands;
Grimly, and solemn, and silent, wait
    The walls of land
Guarding its door, as a treasure fond;
And none may pass to the sea beyond,
But they who trust to the king of fate,
    And pass through the Golden Gate.
The ships go out through its narrow door,
White-sailed, and laden with precious store—
White-sailed, and laden with precious freight,
The ships come back through the Golden Gate.
The sun comes up o'er the Eastern crest,
The sun goes down in the golden West,
And the East is West, and the West is East,
And the sun from his toil of day released,
    Shines back through the Golden Gate.

Down by the side of the Golden Gate—
    The door of life,—
Are resting our cities, sea-embowered,
White-walled, and templed, and marble-towered—
    The end of strife.
The ships have sailed from the silent walls,
And over their sailing the darkness falls.
O, the sea is so dark, and so deep, and wide!
Will the ships come back from the further side?
"Nay; but there is no further side,"
A voice is whispering across the tide,—
"Time, itself, is a circle vast,
Building the future out of the past;
For the new is old, and the old is new,
And the true is false, and the false is true,
And the West is East, and the East is West,
And the sun that rose o'er the Eastern crest,
Gone down in the West of his circling track
Forever, and ever, is shining back
    Through the Golden Gate of life."

O soul! thy city is standing down
By its Golden Gate;
Over it hangs the menacing frown
Of the king of fate.
The sea of knowledge so near its door,
Is rolling away to the further shore—
The Orient side,—
And the ocean is dark, and deep, and wide!
But thy harbor, O Soul! is filled with sails,
Freighted with messages, wonder tales,
From the lands that swing in the sapphire sky.
Where the gardens of God in the ether lie.
If only thy blinded eyes could see,
If only thy deaf-mute heart could hear,
The ocean of knowledge is open to thee,
And its Golden Gate is near!
For the dead are the living,—the living the dead,
And out of the darkness the light is shed;
And the East is West, and the West is East,
And the sun from his toil of day released,
Shines back through the Golden Gate.

TO CLARA SHORTRIDGE FOLTZ

From out the ranks of them that toil
  Thy hand has carved its upward way,
Nor stooped its God-given trust to soil,
  Nor dreamed in weariness to stay.
If faltered e'er that heart of thine,
It ached, but gave the world no sign.

Thy voice has argued in debate,—
  In scathing satire sharply fell;
In forum and in hall of state
  Held listening thousands with its spell.
Then dropped its tones to softest keep
And crooning sang a babe to sleep.

True as the ship is to its port,
  Thy heart—on seas of sun or foam—
Wrought out its masonry in Court,
  But built its tower at home.

And when the gold upon thy head
  Shall change to age's colder gray,
The little hands that thou hast led
  Will lead thee down life's slanting way.
The path is long since over-grown
With flowers of love that thou hast sown.

Then Hail thee! priestess of the law—
  Our fair-browed Portia of the West.
Write on thy shield: "I came, I saw,
  I conquered." Thou hast earned the crest.—
Nay; more, it seemed the gods to thee
Had given the Sakhral's mystery.

And thou hast proved that woman can—
  Who has the grace, and strength, and will—
Work in the wider field of man
  And be a glorious woman, still.

MOUNT WHITNEY

Stern sentinel of Pacific's broad embrace
  Thou standest drear and lone;
The sun's first glance falls on thy snowy face,
  Thou hear'st the ocean's moan.
With foreheads bared the hills enclose thee round;
  Winds woo thee o'er in storm and zephyr sweet,
And summer, with her girdle loosely bound
  Like some fair Ruth, lies blushing at they feet.
No bird on thy bleak summit seeks its rest;
  No flower e'er blossoms on thy chilling breast.
The nations rise, and die, and rise again,
  And still thou standest lone, and drear, and cold,
Immovable, unchangeable as when
  The first-born century above thee rolled.
Thy vigil keep, O Mount, till on the brink
    Of Chaos Time shall break his flight.
Wrapped in thy solitary grandeur sink
  Like lost Atlantis, in thy might.

WELCOMING THE G. A. R. TO CALIFORNIA

Run up the flag to its highest height
  And proudly let it wave
Upon the sunset's wall of light
  To greet the true and brave.

There is never a stripe on its crinkling folds
  Nor a star its field to gem
With the vaunted glory victory holds,
  But owes its place to them.

Bring out again the unlimbered guns,
  And sound the bugle call;
With roll of drums and martial pride
  Salute them comrades all.

Ah! They have another welcome heard,
  And another scene have they;
Their flags are battle-dimmed and torn,
  Their guns had fiercer play.

There are empty sleeves, and stumping limbs,
  There are wounds that never sleep;
And the memories of lonesome graves
  Where nightshade blossoms weep.

Oh, many a soldier's cheek will pale
  Whose heart ne'er beat with fear;
Oh, many a comrade is "marking time,"
  Who cannot answer "Here!"

And day on day of the flying years,
In the ranks grow wider gaps
As down the lines in the camp of life
Old Death is sounding "Taps."

Run up the flag to its highest height,
And proudly let it wave,
Upon the sunset's wall of light
To greet the true and brave.

SAN FRANCISCO*

Upon her thrice seven smiling hills she stood,
Beloved of her patron guide, the good
St. Francis; with pomp and power and pleasure rife.
Richer than Tyre and Sidon was her broad estate,
Fair as Mohamet's dream of after-life;—
Secure, behind her battlemented Golden Gate.
And Dawn slipped down and blessed the sleeping world.
But that unwonted silence, everywhere!
No twitter of a bird in matinal was there,
The dog cowered whimpering at his master's door;
The fishes swimming seaward from the shore.
Then suddenly awakened, all uphurled
Were tower, and dome, and splendid palace wall;
The sick earth reeled and shrank; shock followed shock
Till splintered timbers, dust and tumbling rock
Piled the great city's crumpling streets, and all
Her mighty architecture swayed and groaned
With crunch of wrenching beams, and screak and screech
Of twisted steel. And pallid faces, blank of speech,
Turned helpless to the awesome reddening sky.
From nowhere unto nowhere rumbling moaned
The earthquake's passing sigh.

"Is this the end? This—this our final lot?"
Men looked into each other's eyes and answered not.
And then above the tumult rose a doom more dread;
A thousand sheets of flame leaped up as one;—
The demons from the under earth had spread
Their holocaust to greet the rising sun.
And upward from its terror, and despair,
The smoke of Sacrifice pulsed in the smitten air,
Devouring, roaring, miles of blazing death;—
A kingdom devastated in a breath.
All day the Queen of Evil laughed, and urged
Her fire sons to fiercer rage; all day, all night,
That billowing wall of fire swirled and surged,
And lit far other places with its lurid light.
Men fought it back as gods might fight with Titan foes,
Fought hand to hand, fought face to face, and fell
Unconquered, lying where they fell. And none may tell
The heroisms of that time,—and for no man knows.

* In the great earthquake and fire of April, 1906.

A LEGEND OF SUTRO HEIGHTS

Once when the world was new,
  Once in its dawns and springs,
When the waters a language knew,
  And the hills were living things,
The Mount that is Tamalpais
  And this terrace-bordered Hight,
Stood side by side in the wall of land
  Which held the seas aright.

And the Mount and the Hight were lovers,
  In love with the sea were they,—
In love with the syren Ocean
  Whose beauty before them lay;
Her emerald gown was broidered
  With lace the mermaids spun,
And her tawny bosom glittered
  With the diamonds of the sun.

They gazed on the matchless vista—
  On the wide-out-sweeping zone
Of amber-dappled Ocean,
  And they claimed her each his own.

A quarrel grew between them,
  And the contest rose and raged
Till the universe was shaken
  With the jealous war they waged .

All vain the angered Ocean
  Invoked each nymph and gnome,
And beat her breast against them,
  And flung her arms of foam.

The sun and the moon drew backward
  And hid in their clouded light,
And the pale stars fled affrighted
  Back into the aisles of night.

Then the king of the hills and the waters
  Arose in his wrathful might,
And kindled his red death-furnace
  Under the Mount, and the Hight—
The sea-waves stop and tremble,
  The hills like waves careen—
And the wall was rent asunder,
  And the Ocean rushed between.

The king of the hills and the waters
  Still stood in his wrathful might,
And he hurled his curse prophetic
  On the riven Mount and Hight:
"Ye shall stand thus widely parted
  While the sea-waves wash the shore,
And hear the ocean moaning
  For ever, ever more;
And thou, rebellious Mountain,
  Be a barren waste and dumb
Till the world shall bring you ransom,
  Till the East to the West shall come."

The circling years whirled onward,
  The birds forgot to sing
On the barren, nameless summit
  Under the ban of the king.

One day from the dust and tumult,
From the cares, and frets and ills,
Where standeth the busy city
On its ocean-dented hills,
Came one and stood on the Mountain—
On the Mountain cursed of fate.
He looked on the broad Pacific,
On the narrow-bounded strait;
He saw old Tamalpais,
Black-browed as the frown of hate;
He saw the ships of the nations
Come into the Golden Gate.

And the humbled soul of the Mountain
Crept into the soul of the man,
Swift in his brain evolving
The lines of a mighty plan.

He wove him a wondrous vision;
Of the desolate land he made
A flower-wreathed dome of beauty, —
A sylvan perfumed shade.

He planted the snow pale flowers
And the blooms of tropic dye,
And a giant redwood forest
Held its arms up toward the sky.

The rare and the quaint and the curious
Of the world he hither brought,
And the wonder-shapes in sculpture
Which the master hands had wrought.

And he builded here a temple
To the muses Time has sung,
Full-stored with the hoarded volumes
Of many a clime and tongue,
Where the scholar's hand might gather
From the past its fading gleams,
And the poet's fancy fashion
The thought in his realm of dreams.

And his templed palace garden,
With a royal generous hand,
He gave—a gift—to the people
Of the Golden Western land.

From the ocean's lambent splendor,
From his vision-bowered strand,
He turned to the rock-ribbed summit
And the glaring dunes of sand.

He had forced the earth to open
Her secret treasure door—
And back to the earth he yielded
Her gold thrice doubled o'er.

The jagged rocks are shapen,
To curious curving walls,
To granite carven stairways
And terrace-circled halls.

And curve in curve encloses
Long flower embroidered lines,
Where mythic gods and graces
Dream under palms and pines;

Where the ministers of winter
  Sleep in acacian bowers,
Drugged with the breath of incense
  From purple-throated flowers.

The west wind whispers, whispers,
  Its story in the nights,
And the Ocean chants her anthem
  At the foot of Sutro Hights.

The humbled soul of the Mountain
  Liveth no longer dumb—
The world has brought its ransome,
  The East to the West has come.

HELEN HUNT JACKSON

Proud California! Bend thy head,
And measure, reverently, thy tread;
And plant thy tallest pine to wave
Above the gentle stranger's grave.
* * * * * * * *
A rose dropped down into the sea,
And drowned;—
But every wave that washed a lea,
Or swept the ocean round,
Came back and brought upon its crest
A sweetness from the rose's breast.

A song bird on the summit crown
Of self-denied,
Fell slowly fluttering, fluttering down,
And died;—
But all the hills and valleys rang
With music of the songs it sang.

A woman's soul has crossed the size
Of mortal sight—
A woman's hands, a woman's eyes
Are closed in night;—
But all along the way she came
Are springing blessings on her name.

O rose! O bird! O woman's heart!
Dead heart—dead flower—and silent bird,—
Ye gave us but the fainter part
Of songs ye heard:
The solemn nights have sung to thee,—
The trees, and winds and moaning sea;
The mighty silences of space
Closed round and taught thee face to face!
No land may claim thee to enshrine,
Thou art the world's—the world was thine.

IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE SIERRAS

The pine trees nod to the oaks below,
The wild oats bend to the cliffs of snow;
Noonday's shimmering, gauzy glow
On all the hills is lying—
And the manzanita berries grow
Red in its gorgeous dyeing.
The wood-dove answers the plaintive call
From the nest that is hid in the chemesal,
And the wanton humming bird devours
His feast from the bulky milk-weed flowers.
Threads of cobwebs, glistening gray,
Spun on the wheels of the summer's day,
Glimmering go—and glimmering stay—
A place to dream one's life away.
And the saucy stream goes tumbling down
To water the flowers in a valley town.

THE WHEAT OF SAN JOAQUIN

A thousand rustling yellow miles of wheat,
Gold-ripened in the sun, in one
Vast fenceless field. The hot June pours its flood
Of flaming splendor down, and burns
The field into such yellowness that it
Is gold of Nature's alchemy; and all
The mighty length and breadth of valley glows
With ripeness.
Then a rolling of machinery,
And tramp of horse and scream of steam
And swishing sighs of falling grain,
And sweaty brows of men; and then—
The Samson of the valleys lieth shorn.

THANKSGIVING AT MONTARA

Thanksgiving dawn God's secrets told
In misty lines of pink and gold
Upon your hills, Montara.
The lark, while yet the dawn was dim,
Sang joyously her praise to Him.
Sweet peas that climbed the windy wall
Shook down their fragrance unto all.
Wee wild things felt the shadows pass,
And heard the growing of the grass.
And lo! Thanksgiving left, that night,
The afterglow of God's own light
Upon your hills, Montara.

THEY ALL ARE KIN TO YOU

(Ina Coolbrith)

The twilight, and the dawn,
Sunrise and set of sun—
The summer's golden hush,
All seasons—all in one—
Belong to you.

The rose her secret whispers you
The poppy's dreams, you know,
To you, the mystery of the seas
The West winds blow, and blow,—
They all are kin to you.

And that is why you sit alone
Just at the great sea's door,
And watch, and watch the tides come in,
And watch, and watch the tides go out,—
And the white ships ever more,—
They all are kin to you.

AT SAN DIEGO

Here first on California's soil,
  Cabrillo walked the lonesome sands;
Here first the Christian standard rose
  Upon the sea-washed Western lands,
And Junipero Serra first
  Laid loving hands.

What saw they here, that venturous band,
To bless or touch with loving hand?
Or bid them pause, or dream to stay
Around this silent, sleeping bay?

An acreage of many miles,
  Vast miles of sun-burnt naked space,
Red, brown, and bare, and baked as tiles;
  Whose surface lay unchanged of face
As it had lain, the hills among,
Since first Creation's psalm was sung;
Whose people watched the squirrels play,
And cared not any more than they.

Not these alone, the fathers saw
  Not these made hardships doubly sweet—
He never sees his arrow's flight
  Who is always looking at his feet;—
Those holy fathers, wiser they,
  They marked the broad expanse of plains,
And mountains gushing crystal life
  Enough to fill its thirsting veins;—
They saw, far off, the mingled weft
  Of colors wrought from out the soil,
When Nature rounds upon her loom
  The laborer's legacy of toil.

They served, and toiled, and built, and planned,
But ever saw a promised land;
And heard its slowly rising swells
Ring joyous from their mission bells.

And decades passed, and fifty years,
A century was born and died;
A nation struggled into birth,
And rose to midday of its pride.
And freedom's war-wet staff was set
Beside that one of love and peace;
And suns of noons, and midnight moons,
Unwove and wove time's ageless fleece.
Time crept by the mission bells,
And back, and tied their tongues with rust;
And touched the eye-lids of the priest,
And garmented his bones with dust.

The glory of the mission passed,
Its gloom its glory overcast.
Within its corners, shadow-walled,
The bats made nest; the lizard crawled
Upon the sunny side to sit,
With soulless eyes, and laugh at it.

But smile not ye with scornful lips,
Nor croak a prophecy of this;
There's nothing lost that's lost, and naught
That once has lived, has lived amiss.
Nay, smile not ye, nor count that false
Which failed in promises it gave;
For gold is gold, though it go down
A thousand fathoms in the wave;
And brighter-hued the blossom is
That blooms upon a grave.

In silence sleeps the land no more,
  Its treasury of wealth is found;
And all its curving seagirt shore
  With queenly cities crowned;
While through its gateway come and go
  The sails of suns and sails of snow.

Progress to this old new West
  Has turned her face and set her seal;
Has bound the waters, broke the hills,
  And shod the desert sands with steel.
O land of sun,—hot, splendid sun!—
  Of sea-cool winds, and Southern moons!—
Of days of calm, and nights of balm,
  And languorous, dreamy noons.
No seer hath need to tell for thee,
  Thy daring and thy destiny.

THE LAST PRIESTESS OF THE SUN

Backward-gazing on her ruined temple
The Priestess stands,
Fierce, and wondering, and sullen, gazes
On the desecration of the spoilers' hands.
Dead are the fires upon your altar, maiden,
Despoiled of all its richess is your shrine;
Your sacred sacrificial vessel gives you
No answering sign.
And palms will grow upon your temple
And still the sun will shine. [border,

THE BUILDERS

Ye builders coming late unto the Aztec's Sea—
Unto the sun-land Southwest of the West,
Hail to you, hail! Your temples solemnized today
Disturb no dead world's rest.

Thrice hail to you! Ye builders by the Aztec's Sea;
Twin fold the blessings of your work in stone and
wood,—
Who helps to make the world more beautiful
Helps God to make it good.

THE NATIVE DAUGHTERS OF THE GOLDEN WEST.

When California wrought her royal crown of gold—
The perfectness where in her own proud fame should rest—
She took the foot-prints of the pioneers,
She took the sound of battle, and the strength
Of manhood measured by the long-drawn length
Misfortune stretched for them across the years.
She took the whispering sighs of pines that shake
Their needles down on graves lost in the wake
Of time. She took the heart-sick patience and the tears
Of women waiting, waiting, waiting, for their loved
Who came not back. And then, the sacredness
And permanency of her state-hood laid
Upon this shrine of sacred things. Of these she made
Her crown; and wrote around its shining crest:
"My Native Daughter of the Golden West."

WONDERFUL, MYSTERIOUS MEXICO

Builded on the ruins of dead thrones
Whose temple walls were old when Thebes was new;
On altars whose weird sacrificial stones
With ghastly offerings were crimsoned through.
Oblivion hides and holds thy secrets fast—
The dust of ages lies upon thy past,
All wonderful, mysterious Mexico.

The conquerors came knocking at thy peaceful door
And met thy outstretched hands with sword and flame;
With broken gods bestrewed thy altar floor,
And slew thee in Christ's loving, gentle name.
But thy bold eagle clutched a serpent in the slipping sand,
And bore it writhing o'er his blood-swept land,
All wonderful, mysterious Mexico.

Thou land of shrines and crosses, legends, yesterdays;
From tropic splendor to eternal snow,
Thy purple mountains rim such unfound ways
Of wealth, the greedy world turns hither to thy slow
Awakening; to lay swift hands upon the treasured worth
Thy solemn hills and hotland jungles hold—
Why, thou couldst change the commerce of the earth,
And fill the coffers of the world with gold;
Thou wonderful, awakening Mexico.

ALASKA'S WOMAN

(Mrs. Mary E. Hart)

Don't you hear the icy winter calling you?
The far voice of your fierce snow-blinding solemn
North?
Your midnight sun turns one dim edge above
the snow.
At Kotzebue it's "54 below."

The mighty Yukon's roaring protest shakes the
crouching hills,
In vain attempts to burst the icy barrier closing
down
Upon its breast. Aurora Borealis shoots across
the sky
Red searchlights of her miracle,
And all the heaven with flaming splendor fills.

The tundra crackles for your mucklucks'* tread.
Your parka† hangs beseeching on your cabin
That far north cabin wall [wall,—
(A timber wolf housed with her young ones there
last fall).
Your huskies‡ snap their teeth impatiently,
And lurch against the traces to be gone.
The sleety blizzard bellows forth its challenge,—
daring you to come.

And still the sunland holds you. I am knocking
at your door;
The perfume of your flowers besets me as I knock.
You have grown indolent with too much shelter-
ing ease,
You could not hear the wild North call midst all
of these.
Your neighbor leans across the fence to speak
to me—
"Left for Alaska more 'n a month ago?"—What?
you don't say!
Well that's quite like her. Thank you Mrs. ——
er-er-'much obliged. Good-day.

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* Fur boots with tops of knee or thigh length.

† A hooded fur shirt,—an Alaskan outer garment reaching to the knees, worn by men, women and children.

‡ A breed of native Alaskan dogs.

What know you of my Soul's inherent strife
By that calm faith—untried—which wells in thine—
How can you from the knowledge of your life,
Write out a creed for mine?

Songs That Have Been Set To Music

LOVE'S WAY

Love came to my window and tapped one day,
Touched hands and touched lips, and went flying
away;—
For Love is like that alway, and alway—
Love is like that alway.

The world went all wintry, sad years passed, and
then
Love rested his wings at my window again;
I clasped him, and held him so close to my heart
I thought he would never, could never, depart.
But Love slipped his light wings and went flying
away,
For Love is like that alway and alway—
Love is like that alway.

Once more Love came smiling and whispering
to me,
But I said to him: "Love, pretty Love, don't
you see
The window is barred, dear, between you and
me?"
And Love folded his wings at my window to stay.
For Love is like that alway, and alway—
Love is like that alway.

GOD BLESS YOU WHEREVER YOU ARE

The twilight was lonesome,—was eerie,
  The heavens showed but one little star;
We parted in silence, my dearie,—
  God bless you wherever you are.

Wherever your footsteps are straying,—
  Anear me, or wandering afar,—
Remember I'm saying, I'm praying:
  "God bless you! wherever you are."

THE DRYADS

O, I was a dryad, and you were a dryad,
In the long and long ago!
And so when the leaves in the wild-wood are whispering,
And the trees wide shadows throw,
I can hear you calling me
In the way it used to be;
And I know as we used to know,
When I was a dryad and you were a dryad
In the long and long ago.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

"What will you give me?" I asked him—
  My lover of long ago.
"What shall I keep to remember
  That ever you loved me so?"
"Dearest one," softly he answered,
  "We have sifted life's gold and its dross,—
That you may not forget how I loved you
  I'll make you the sign of the Cross."

As light as the touch of the zephyr
  That blows in the nights of the South,
With my face in his hands he kissed me
  On forehead and eyes and mouth.
O, I might forget that he loved me,
  Forget, too, the pain of my loss,
But deep in my heart, and forever,
  Is burning his sign of the Cross.

THAT DAY IN TEXAS

The gulf blew its gentlest breeze—
The whisperings of some far seas,
The sunshine flamed across the land,
I felt the warm clasp of your hand
And Oh, the light in your dar eyes
Was brighter than the sunlit skies,
Was brighter than the sunlit skies,
That day in Texas.

The years, the year, that are to be
May never more bring you to me,
And days will come, and days will go—
But ever when the South winds blow
And sunshine flames across the plain,
I'll hear your voice and live again—
I'll hear your voice and live again
That day in Texas.

CANST THOU NOT HEAR ME

I failed thee in Love's dear respect
Too lightly held my plighted vow,
I broke thy heart with cold neglect,
And smiled on loves so less than thou.
I see thee again,
And my dream it is fair.
I see thee as then,
With a rose in thy hair,
Thou art so near me
Canst thou not hear me
Calling thee, calling calling thee—
Canst thou not hear my heart.
World-weary, and too late, I find
The world but gave a wanton's dole
And thou alone of womankind
Didst love me, love with thy soul .
I see thee again,
And my dream it is fair.
I see thee as then
With a rose in thy hair,
Thou art so near me
Canst thou not hear me
Calling thee, calling calling thee—
Canst thou not hear my heart.

JUST THIS ONE DAY

We drifted idly, you and I,
The world was fair, and blue the sky;
Upon the dimpled, sunlit stream
We saw the water-lilies gleam.
No clasp of hands, no lovers' kiss,
Yet never was a day like this
One perfect day of earth and sky—
Just this one day, and you, and I.

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